

Working as a GRTU Funded Intern with TPWD Inland Fisheries

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During my time as a GRTU funded intern with Texas Parks and Wildlife Inland Fisheries Management District out of the San Marcos in the summer of 2021, I learned many invaluable skills and picked up quite of bit of fisheries knowledge along the way. It was also important with regards to networking, as there is no shortage of great people who care about our natural resources working for the agency. The staff were all very accommodating and made sure of a very diverse interning experience.

Day-to-day tasks varied, sometimes dramatically. This included doing angler creel surveys, zebra mussel inspections, setting hoop nets for Channel Catfish, aquatic vegetation surveys, data entry/editing, and much more. The importance of aquatic vegetation as fish habitat is something that really stuck out to me, particularly with how variable between waterbodies. I was involved with actively monitoring trends and density by creating maps of aquatic vegetation. This was done using GIS technology to plot vegetation lines around the perimeter of multiple Central Texas lakes and streams. Every day was a little different, which made for an exciting summer. My internship duties were not just limited to what the fisheries management crew was doing. I was also able to go out with the TPWD River Studies team a few times to help with their stream/river monitoring projects. We looked at water quality and how rivers either eroded or were built over time by measuring the changes in the bank heights. I also spent a few days with the fish hatchery crew harvesting and cycling their production ponds. I even got to work briefly with an entomologist picking out and identifying riverine aquatic invertebrates from samples.

Overall, my summer spent with Texas Parks and Wildlife Inland Fisheries was a very positive and valuable experience. It allowed me to gain hands-on experience that cannot be gained by solely attending the classroom. The internship also served as a segue from college to the real world, providing a real-world look at the many different facets and challenges in fisheries management. Due to the experience and networking connections I gained during my summer internship, I was able to successfully apply, interview, and accept a full-time position with the TPWD Coastal Fisheries Division. I can only say positive things about my experience as an intern. I want to give a big thanks to the GRTU Chapter for making this opportunity available to me, and hope that this unique opportunity continues for others for many years to come.